

2008 as "National Criminal Justice Month," introduced by my distinguished colleague from Texas, Representative TED POE. This important legislation calls on policymakers, educators, criminal justice officials, community leaders, victim service providers, nonprofits, and others to promote awareness of how to prevent and respond to crime through the creation of a National Criminal Justice Month.

A country's criminal justice system is often a reflection of what values the society deems to be important. Our criminal justice system serves as a means for society to enforce the standards of conduct necessary to protect individuals and the community. During this month we need to be mindful of the need for criminal justice reform. Currently, there are approximately seven million adults on probation, parole, or are incarcerated causing the cost of crime to individuals, communities, businesses, and the various levels of government to be well into the billions. I have sought to alleviate a number of the sentencing disparities responsible for such frivolous government spending through various pieces of legislation, including my "The Second Chance Act" and "The Drug Sentencing Reform and Cocaine Kingpin Trafficking Act of 2007" that will help to lessen some of the economic and social burden. Our focus should be to educate Americans and to promote awareness within American society as to the causes and consequences of crime, as well as the strategies and developments for preventing and responding to crime.

The American people deserve to have a knowledge of the criminal justice system; thus, allowing society to feel safe in their homes as well as on the streets. In 2006, fifty percent of Americans admitted they feared that their home would be burglarized when they are not home, thirty-four percent of American women feared that they would be sexually assaulted, and forty-four percent of Americans feared they would be a victim of a terrorist attack. That is unacceptable. Americans need to be educated about the criminal justice system and how it works to protect all Americans.

During this month there has to be a joint effort between policymakers, criminal justice officials, educators, victim service providers, nonprofit organizations, community leaders, and others to promote awareness of how to prevent and respond to crime. It is imperative that we reach out through all the above names avenues to ensure that each and every American knows just how their criminal justice system operations protect them.

This important legislation creates an avenue through which to educate the American people about the criminal justice system as well as the causes and consequences of crime, how to prevent crime, and how to respond to crime. I strongly support this important legislation and urge all my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 945.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1500

ARTS REQUIRE TIMELY SERVICE (ARTS) ACT

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1312) to expedite adjudication of employer petitions for aliens of extraordinary artistic ability, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1312

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Arts Require Timely Service (ARTS) Act".

SEC. 2. EXPEDITED ADJUDICATION OF EMPLOYER PETITIONS FOR ALIENS OF EXTRAORDINARY ARTISTIC ABILITY.

Section 214(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking "Attorney General" each place it appears and inserting "Secretary of Homeland Security"; and

(2) in paragraph (6)(D)—
(A) by striking "(D) Any" and inserting "(D)(i) Any";

(B) by striking "Once the" and inserting "Except as provided in clause (ii), once the"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:
"(ii) The Secretary of Homeland Security shall adjudicate each petition for an alien with extraordinary ability in the arts (as described in section 101(a)(15)(O)(i)), an alien accompanying such an alien (as described in clauses (ii) and (iii) of section 101(a)(15)(O)), or an alien described in section 101(a)(15)(P) (other than an alien described in section 214(c)(4)(A) (relating to athletes)) not later than 30 days after—

"(I) the date on which the petitioner submits the petition with a written advisory opinion, letter of no objection, or request for a waiver; or

"(II) the date on which the 15-day period described in clause (i) has expired, if the petitioner has had an opportunity, as appropriate, to supply rebuttal evidence.

"(iii) If a petition described in clause (ii) is not adjudicated before the end of the 30-day period described in clause (ii) and the petitioner is an arts organization described in paragraph (3), (5), or (6) of section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from tax under section 501(a) of such Code for the taxable year preceding the calendar year in which the petition is submitted, or an individual or entity petitioning primarily on behalf of such an organization, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall provide the petitioner with the premium-processing services referred to in section 286(u), without a fee."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, H.R. 1312 is a bipartisan measure intended to address the extended delays in visa processing faced by nonprofit arts organizations when they invite foreign artists to perform in the United States.

Hosting a performance by a foreign artist or arts group requires, obviously, a great deal of planning. And the host organization has to calendar the event, advertise it, and sell tickets far in advance. And these efforts are made with the expectation that the visa petitions filed by the guest performers will be adjudicated in time for their arrival in the United States. If their adjudication is delayed, it causes a tremendous disruption and has led some arts organizations in the world to stop engaging foreign artists altogether because they can't risk the expensive canceling of performers.

Performances by foreign artists give American audiences the opportunity to experience a variety of arts traditions. And when they're called off, it's not just the host organization and the audience that bears the cost, the cancelled show impacts the local economy as well.

Current law requires the Department of Homeland Security to process petitions for O and P visas within 2 weeks of receipt of a completed petition. And the Department has implemented a premium 15-day processing for a \$1,000 fee, but when a visa is required to be processed in 14 days, it seems particularly unreasonable to ask a nonprofit entity to pay \$1,000 for a 15-day service. So, what we do in this measure is strike a balance by giving the Department 30 days, more than twice the current processing time, and if the visa is not processed in 30 days and the petitioner is a nonprofit organization, the bill requires the Department to provide premium processing for no additional fee.

I'm happy to say that my colleagues, the former Judiciary Committee Chair, JAMES SENSENBRENNER, and the current ranking member, LAMAR SMITH of Texas, have tried and worked with us to arrive at a solution similar to the one laid out in this bill.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) for his generous comments a while ago, and I certainly appreciated working with him on this bill as well.

Performing arts organizations use O and P visas to bring many talented foreign artists to our country to perform

before American audiences. Despite the fact that the Immigration Nationality Act provides that the Department of Homeland Security shall adjudicate O and P visas within 14 days, adjudication of up to 180 days has been reported. These long delays create the risk that performances involving international artists must be cancelled, creating high economic risks to arts institutions and the local economies they support.

Henry Fogel, President of the American Symphony Orchestra League, has stated that, "nonprofit arts organizations confront long waits and uncertainty in gaining approval for visa petitions for foreign guest artists. This degree of uncertainty can prove too risky for many performing arts organizations and is having a direct impact on their ability to present foreign guest artists. Orchestras must sell tickets in advance, creating a financial obligation to their audiences. Performances are date, time and location specific, and the nature of scheduling, booking and confirming highly sought after guest soloists and performing groups requires that the timing of the visa process be efficient and reliable."

The INA does provide that the Department of Homeland Security can charge a fee of \$1,000 to provide premium processing for employment-based visa petitions, adjudication within 15 days. However, many nonprofit arts organizations cannot afford to pay this extra amount either because they are a small, cash-strapped institution, or because they sponsor many foreign artists over a year's time. The Arts Required Timely Service, ARTS, Act provides that if a nonprofit organization's petition for an O visa or for a P visa is not adjudicated within 30 days, it will receive premium processing free of charge.

I support this bill. And I want to thank the chairman and Mr. BERMAN for their bipartisan amendment in committee that clarified that only arts organizations that are qualified as tax exempt under 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code can receive the fee waiver, and that organizations petitioning for athletes do not qualify for this waiver.

Mr. KING, the gentleman from Iowa and the ranking member of the Immigration Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee, offered a number of amendments in the Judiciary Committee markup of this bill. For example, one provided that only small and nonprofit arts organizations should be eligible for the fee waiver. These amendments would have, in fact, improved the bill. Unfortunately, they were not adopted.

On the whole, however, this is a good bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, although there is great support for this bill, I have no other requests for time.

And in full confidence and trust of the other side, I return the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the chairman that I will not take advantage of his yielding back the time. I do, however, yield 4 minutes to Mr. KING, the gentleman from Iowa, the ranking member of the Immigration Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank Mr. SMITH, the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, and the chairman for his graciousness.

I appreciate the privilege to address this issue under these circumstances. And I make no pledge about taking advantage of the situation, but I will stay with the attitude and the comity that the chairman demonstrates always, and that is that I come to the floor here to rise in opposition to this bill.

First I want to explain that premium processing is in the event that the normal application for the visa isn't processed in time, then the performing arts organization, which is a 501(c) nonprofit organization, can then apply. If they want to pay \$1,000 premium to turn that around quickly, they can do that today.

So, I'm looking at this thing from the perspective of this is a fee-based system that we have. We fund USCIS through fee-based, and we had hearings in the committee and we brought that forward and it's clear. So, it becomes a zero sum game. If you decide that you're going to provide a premium processing service for one organization, that means the burden of the cost of that gets distributed across all the other applicants.

So, I'm stuck with this image of, let me just say the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I'm very convinced, and have not been there, that people arrive there in limousines wearing tuxedos and formal gowns, and at the same time, I know that they have a foundation that is quite significant. For example, assets of \$2,424,000,000 in the foundation, an annual revenue stream of \$326 million. Now, out of \$326 million in annual revenue or \$2.4 billion in the foundation, it seems to me that those kind of very wealthy, not-for-profit wealthy organizations could come up with the extra thousand dollars, particularly because people are arriving in tuxedos and getting out of limousines at the expense of the poor person who is in blue jeans and sneakers. And that's my argument here.

I yield to the chairman.

Mr. CONYERS. I thank the gentleman, STEVE KING, for yielding to me.

In other words, you're recommending that we should have had a two-tier system, because there are some aspiring jazz performers in Europe who want to come over, and they have considerably less than \$2 billion in accumulated assets.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I would submit that the wealthy

foundations have the revenue to be able to provide for the premium processing in the event that they didn't plan far enough ahead to get their application in on time. I would think those with the highest wealth should be the ones that have the most ability to plan ahead or to pay if they fail to plan ahead.

Mr. CONYERS. Well, it's so uncharacteristic of you to want to sock the rich and not just charge everybody the same amount.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the chairman and I appreciate his remarks. And there is probably some basis for him to make that argument.

Just to close this argument, I will argue first that I offered a series of amendments which Mr. SMITH addressed, and I exempted those foundations with less than \$1 million in annual revenues. Then I went up the line to \$10 million and then \$50 million. I was trying to find that place by which it would get to somebody's conscience on the Judiciary Committee or in this Congress that we should say, you have enough money to manage this yourself. We never found that plateau. I actually wrote one that would have been a googolplex, kind of an unlimited number, but I'm confident it would have been rejected as well.

So, I would just submit that the one organization that I've singled out here, Metropolitan Museum of Art, would have revenue in the 5 minutes we've discussed this to be able to pay for the premium processing of a single artist and accumulate in that hour about enough for 14 artists.

So, I think we should have drawn the line at taking care of our small foundations, and for that reason I am opposing this bring. And I appreciate the sentiment that brings it to the floor.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LUNGREN) who, like Mr. KING, is a member of the Immigration Subcommittee. He will be our last speaker.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. I thank the gentleman for the time, and I rise in support of this bill.

I was with my 90-year-old mother on Sunday back in Sacramento. And I remember when my mom used to drag me and my six brothers and sisters off to the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra. And I remember when she worked with the leaders of the orchestra to bring other performers over to perform. It's not an easy thing when you have an organization like that. I know the gentleman from Iowa is talking about some of the more expensive organizations, but we're talking in this bill about all of these nonprofits being able to have the flexibility to bring foreign artists over here.

Interestingly, the Congress, a number of years ago, asked the agency involved to have a flexible system which would allow them to make the request up to 1 year before. And what happened was the agency turned it around and

said well, you couldn't do it unless it was at least 6 months or a year before. So, it sort of defeated the very flexibility Members of Congress asked for to allow this to happen.

We should understand that what we've been trying to do is get the agency to deal with these applications in a timely fashion. And the idea that you would get premium service is really kind of an interesting idea, to ask the government to do what it should do, but to do it on time we now charge you for it. Well, we do that in some circumstances because we do have difficulty with budgets, but here we're talking about only nonprofit art organizations.

So many times on this floor, it seems to me, we do more than we should; we go out and we solve problems that aren't there. We often pass legislation in search of a problem. This is not that case. This is a problem that does exist. These organizations, the Alabama Symphony Organization, the Florida West Coast Symphony, the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, the Hubbard Street Dance in Chicago, the Louisville Orchestra, the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, Opera of Cleveland, Paul Taylor Dance Company, Pittsburgh Opera, Sarasota Opera, Florida Grand Opera, I mean, you can go down and down and down, and you see this is all over the country, a request of community organizations that are not profit that are just asking for the flexibility to be able to bring foreign artists here, which also creates an environment for U.S. artists to go overseas. And I'm old enough to recall during the Cold War that was one of the things we thought was a good thing. In fact, if you think about it, the Soviets, that's one of the things they didn't want, they didn't want American artists over there and they didn't want their artists over here. Why? Because it really began to open the eyes of many people as to some of the greatness that we have and the freedom that we have and the artistic merit that exists in a country such as ours.

So, I would just hope that we would support this bill. It should not be controversial. Hopefully, it will be a unanimous vote.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee has explained the problem addressed by H.R. 1312. I just want to add a short history of the bipartisan work on this issue. I also want to express my appreciation to Chairman CONYERS for moving the bill and to some of my colleagues who have been advocating for this solution for quite some time.

For several years now, a bipartisan group of Members has been urging USCIS to find and administrative remedy for lengthy processing times experienced by arts organizations petitioning for O and P visas. In October 2003, I was joined by 15 Members in sending a letter to USCIS Director Aguirre encouraging him to implement a number of reforms in the processing of arts-related visas. At the time, arts organizations filing for O and P visas were in a real catch-22. They were not allowed to file

visa petitions earlier than 6 months before a performance, but USCIS was routinely taking longer than 6 months to adjudicate the petitions.

To their credit, USCIS did what they could to remedy the problem by regulation. But USCIS could not do administratively what we recommended, which was to create a consequence for failing to meet the required processing time for O and P petitions. That was the impetus for this bill.

The only remedy available without the bill was to pay for premium processing. Telling a nonprofit arts organization to pay \$1,000 for expedited process is in effect saying: "You've paid \$390 to file this petition that we're required by law to process in 14 days, but for an extra \$1000, we might process in 15 days." That just doesn't make any sense.

What we've done in this bill is create an incentive for timely processing.

Solving this problem has been a joint effort. We have had the benefit of input from the Department of Homeland Security, as well as the cooperation of Ranking Member LAMAR SMITH, who worked with us to tighten the language of the bill at markup. I want to express my appreciation for the collaboration of my colleagues Mr. LUNGREN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CHABOT, our former colleague on the Judiciary Committee, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and the many other Members who joined in the efforts leading up to this legislation.

International arts exchange is, in a sense, cultural diplomacy. Just a few weeks ago, the New York Philharmonic made a historic trip to Pyongyang. I understand that the 300-member delegation was the largest U.S. presence in North Korea since the end of the Korean war. The Philharmonic's musical director called the visit "a gesture of friendship and goodwill from one people to another." These exchanges may not resolve the world's conflicts, but they create bonds that can pay substantial dividends in years to come.

The ARTS Act is meant to encourage and facilitate these exchanges, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1312, the "Arts Require Timely Service, ARTS, Act," introduced by my distinguished colleague from California, Representative BERMAN. This important legislation amends the Immigration and Nationality Act to allow for the expedited adjudication of an employer petition for an alien of extraordinary artistic ability, an alien accompanying such alien, or an alien who is an athlete or entertainer.

Mr. Speaker, to paraphrase President John F. Kennedy, the true greatness of a nation can be measured by its accomplishments in the domain of the arts and culture. America has always benefited from the free flow of foreign artistic talent, some of which has served this country with great distinction, to mention but the late great cellist and Soviet dissident Mstislav "Slava" Rostropovich. Our immigration system is an important gateway for artists and musicians from abroad and as such it should serve the broader cultural goals of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, by inviting foreign artists to perform, arts organizations in the United States provide American audiences the opportunity to experience a variety of artistic talent and encourage a supportive climate for American artists to perform abroad. In the last sev-

eral years, nonprofit arts organizations have confronted dramatic delays and uncertainties in the processing of visa petitions for foreign guest artists. These delays not only impact the immediate availability of foreign artists to perform alongside American artists, but also threaten to impede the ability of U.S. artists to perform abroad.

When a nonprofit arts organization invites a foreign performer, or an entire symphony for that matter, the organization must calendar, advertise, and ticket performances far in advance, all on reliance that they will successfully petition for a visa for their guest performer. In the last several years, delays in processing have led many smaller arts organizations to stop engaging foreign artists altogether because they cannot risk the potential expense of canceling a performance as a result of slow visa processing. Those organizations that have persevered have seen increasingly frequent situations in which performances involving foreign guest artists must be cancelled because the U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Services, USCIS, cannot process visa petitions within a 6-month period before the performance. This is an issue not only for the arts organizations bringing in a foreign artists, but also American artists who are slated to be part of these performances, as well as all of the support staff employed by the organizations as a result of a performance.

Most nonprofit arts organizations cannot afford the current \$1,000 fee for premium processing, a program that was adopted primarily at the request of for-profit corporations. Yet, regular visa processing can now take up to 180 days—too long for arts organizations to accommodate. These delays in the visa process can harm nonprofit institutions and the local economies in which they exist.

Since 2003, a bipartisan group of Members has urged USCIS to remedy this problem administratively. In October of that year, 16 members sent a letter to the USCIS Director encouraging him to implement a number of reforms including reducing processing for O and P petitions filed by or on behalf of nonprofit organizations to 30 days or automatically remove those petitions to premium processing at no additional fee. To date, these reforms have not been made administratively, and in discussions, USCIS has represented that they are not certain they could make such changes without legislative action.

The ARTS Act would address visa processing delays facing nonprofit arts organizations by amending section 214(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to require USCIS to shift to premium processing without additional fees any O or P visa that is not processed within 30 days of filing a complete petition if the petitioner is or is filing on behalf of a qualified nonprofit organization.

Mr. Speaker, it is not by accident that I wrote a letter on this subject to then USCIS Director Eduardo Aguirre. This act exemplifies the bipartisan spirit in which we should approach this important matter so that our Nation could continue to shine in the cultural field as it shines in other domains.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation speaks directly to principles of cultural and intellectual exchange that our great Nation was founded upon. I am proud to support this legislation and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1312.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1312, the Arts Require Timely

Service Act, or the ARTS Act, and I thank Congressman BERMAN and Chairman CONYERS for their leadership on this important issue.

Under immigration law, foreign artists or groups must obtain a visa in order to perform in America. However, over the last few years, this process has been severely delayed, leading some nonprofits to stop planning events that include foreign artists altogether. These delays not only impact the immediate availability of foreign artists to perform alongside American artists, but also threaten to impede the ability of U.S. artists to perform abroad.

The ARTS Act would address these delays by requiring the Government to expedite—without any additional fees—visas for foreign artists that are not processed within 30 days of filing, if the visa petition is filed on behalf of a qualified nonprofit organization.

The ARTS Act will help end the delays and uncertainties in the processing of visa petitions for foreign guest artists coming to the United States.

America is a great land of opportunity for artists, and in my district, this is particularly true. New York City prides itself as being an international center for the arts, yet the current system is failing it. It is becoming increasingly difficult for too many foreign artists to come to America to perform. Foreign artists bring to America their own unique artistic abilities, and every time they are essentially prevented from performing in America, we do a disservice to the arts and to ourselves.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1312, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1515

COMMEMORATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1061) commemorating the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and encouraging people of the United States to pause and remember the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1061

Whereas 40 years ago on April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the moral leader of America, was taken from us all too soon by an assassin's bullet, while standing on the balcony of his motel room in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was to lead sanitation workers in protest against low wages and intolerable working conditions;

Whereas Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., while just one man, changed America forever in a few short years through his preaching of nonviolence and passive resistance;

Whereas Dr. King was the preeminent civil rights advocate of his time, leading the civil rights movement in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s and earning world-wide recognition as an eloquent and articulate spokesperson for equality;

Whereas Dr. King dedicated his life to securing the fundamental principles of the United States of liberty and justice for all United States citizens;

Whereas Dr. King was a champion of non-violence who fervently advocated nonviolent resistance as the strategy to end segregation and racial discrimination in America, and in 1964, at age 35, he became the youngest man to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition for his efforts;

Whereas through his work and reliance on nonviolent protest, Dr. King was instrumental in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965;

Whereas Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., broke down walls of racial segregation and racial discrimination in places of public accommodation;

Whereas Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., opened doors to the participation of all Americans in the political process;

Whereas the work of Dr. King created a basis of understanding and respect and helped communities, and the United States as a whole, to act cooperatively and courageously to restore tolerance, justice, and equality between people;

Whereas in the face of hatred and violence, Dr. King preached a doctrine of nonviolence and civil disobedience to combat segregation, discrimination, and racial injustice, and believed that people have the moral capacity to care for other people;

Whereas Dr. King awakened the conscience and consciousness of the United States and used his message of hope to bring people together to build the "Beloved Community", a community of justice, at peace with itself;

Whereas Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., through his persistence, raw courage, and faith brought about a nonviolent revolution in America without firing a single bullet; and

Whereas our country and our society are better because of what he did and what he said: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives encourages all Americans to—

(1) pause and remember the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on this, the 40th anniversary of his death;

(2) commemorate the legacy of Dr. King, so that, as Dr. King hoped, "one day this Nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal"; and

(3) remember the message of Dr. King and rededicate themselves to Dr. King's goal of a free and just United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 1061.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. I thank the Speaker, and I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, this Friday, April 4, will mark the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination in 1968.

I note that, once again, our distinguished colleague from Georgia, JOHN LEWIS, has introduced a bipartisan House Resolution calling upon all Americans, on this anniversary, to pause and remember the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and I'd like to acknowledge the many members of the Judiciary Committee supporting this resolution, LAMAR SMITH, GERALD NADLER, ZOE LOFGREN, BOBBY SCOTT, KEITH ELLISON, STEVE COHEN and others.

Dr. King was not only our greatest civil rights leader, but he was also the person that personally has given me the political, philosophical undergirding to attempt to transfer his belief system into some of the objectives of the United States through the Congress. What a leader he was.

I shall be in Memphis this Friday celebrating, with the distinguished gentleman from New York, Harry Belafonte, and many others, the work that he has done in trying to bring justice, understanding, full employment, an economic system, and end the war in this country and in this world.

He addressed, on the night before his assassination, the sanitation workers in Memphis at the Mason Temple. And I don't know about you, but it seemed to me that he had a premonition that he was spending the last days of his life on earth in this cause. He seemed to have projected his understanding of how fleeting his life may have been.

Of course, I'm also connected to Dr. King by his family, Coretta Scott King and their children, and of course, the unbelievably courageous Mrs. Rosa Parks, who later came to Detroit and honored my office by working there for many, many years.

And so I'm very pleased to join in with this re-examination and remembrance of our great leader, to me, one of the greatest leaders of the 20th century. And so I'm proud to stand before you as the chairman of the Judiciary to bring this resolution forward.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This bill commemorates the 40th anniversary of the tragic assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King was the leader of a historic, nonviolent revolution in the U.S. Over the course of his life he fought for equal justice and led the Nation towards racial harmony.

While advancing this great movement, Dr. King's home was bombed, and he was subjected to relentless personal and physical abuse. Despite this violence, Dr. King responded in peace